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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT THURSDAY, December 28, 1933.

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SUBJECT:"CARING FOR YOUR VELVET DRESS."Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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This is the day that I promised to talk about reviving the crushed velvet dress. As I told you on Tuesday, a friend of mine, who owns a black velvet dress, wrote me asking what to do about some crushed spots caused by packing the dress in her suitcase. She also spoke of similar crushed places in the back of the skirt and at the elbows. So the question is: How to treat velvet to remove these marked places?

The textile specialists say that steam is the answer. A steam bath usually will bring velvet back to its original texture. An old velvet dress that looks almost hopeless with wear may come out looking like new after a good steaming. I know because I saw my next-door neighbor do a very successful job like that last month. What do you think she used for the steaming apparatus? Nothing but her kitchen tea-kettle and a piece of rubber tubing about four feet long. The kind of tea-kettle that is most convenient for this job has a very tightly fitting lid and a good-sized spout. Of course, the rubber tube needs to be the right size to fit the spout.

Now let me tell you just exactly how my neighbor went about this job of steaming her velvet dress. First, she hung the dress on a hanger not far from the stove. Then she filled her tea kettle about half full of water--no more, so that the rising steam could pour out of the spout easily. Then she attached the rubber tube to the spout of the kettle. When the water in the kettle began to boil and the steam began to come out that tube, she put the steaming end of the tube up inside the dress. By the way, that tube, of course, was hot, so she held it with a towel.

To raise the pile of the velvet, she held the steaming tube as near as she could to the back of the fabric, but she was careful not to touch the material. Beginning at the top of the dress on the inside she slowly passed the steaming tube downward. Certain spots on the velvet didn't entirely disappear with the steaming. So she brushed these lightly with a soft brush and steamed them again. When the dress was damp from top to bottom--thoroughly steamed, she hung it up in a doorway to dry. Why a doorway? Because in this open space the dress would come in contact with nothing while drying. Damp velvet spots very easily just by touching. More than this, a doorway usually has a good draught--lots of air passing through to dry the dress quickly.

Other people have tole me that they have had very good luck freshening velvet by steaming it in the bathroom. Hang the dress near the bathtub and then draw a tubful of boiling hot water. The steam in the room will dampen the dress and raise the pile of the velvet. If you have a shower-bath, that's even better for steaming. Hang the dress on a hanger on the high rod of the shower curtain.

Then turn on the hot water and let the steam rising from it give your dress a beauty treatment. But be careful that only steam reached the fabric, not water.

While we're on the subject of velvet, perhaps you'll be interested in some other helpful ideas that the specialists gave me. They say that velvet needs different and more delicate care than many other dress materials. When you are choosing velvet, select a piece that looks well on the wrong side. Allow plenty of yardage when you're buying velvet or making a dress. Pile fabrics haven't the "give" or elasticity of other fabrics and need generous fitting and plenty of width for seams. Another reason that velvets may require more yardage is that if you cut them against the pile, they won't mark so easily.

By the way, when you are cutting a pattern out of velvet, or when you are fitting it, be very careful not to mark or mar it. Even ordinary pins may make marks that are difficult to remove. Better use the very thin short pins, known as "silk pins", or even needles, to pin your pattern on. And remove all pins immediately. Thread may also mark the velvet. So use silk thread for basting. Be sure the seams are right before stitching them, because machine stitching leaves a very definite mark on the fabric.

As we mentioned before, you need to fit velvet very carefully and generously. If you fit it too close to the figure the seams will soon pull out.

Any other suggestions about velvet? Oh, yes. Here's a hint about pressing the seams. Of course, you can't press velvet as you do other fabrics. That would flatten the pile hopelessly. Yet the seams often need pressing to make the dress look finished. Well, here's how you arrange the matter. Stand your iron on end. Cover it with a damp cloth. Draw the seam across the edge of the steaming covered iron. That really amounts to steaming the seams.

Whenever you crease or mash velvet, either when you are making your dress or when you are wearing it, remember that steaming and careful drying are the cures. If you want long service from velvet, if you want to keep it looking its best, treat it with the care that such a delicate material deserves.

So much for clothes. Tomorrow we're going to plan a New Year's dinner for Monday and an easy dinner for Sunday, the day before. Please listen in with pencils, tomorrow, in case you want to jot down some of these menu suggestions.